As administrators, we were very pleased at how well school opened this year! At the Open House, we saw a TON of families and heard so many comments about how happy students (and parents!) were to be returning to school.

The administrators have spent a lot of time walking around the school & into classrooms the last two weeks. It has been wonderful to see students engaged in their learning & positively interacting with their teacher & peers.

We are looking forward to a great year at Saratoga! One of our big focuses is on positive behavior supports and increasing our positive interactions with students. Research tells us that students respond better to positive reinforcement than to punitive actions. Gone are the days of teachers “not smiling until the winter holidays.” We know that our students will respond to adults being positive. Be sure to ask your child about any SMART Stallions they might have earned that day and the reason they earned it.

New this year is this bi-weekly community newsletter. Be on the lookout for it every other Monday in your email! We hope you will enjoy hearing about all that is going on at Saratoga and find it informational!

Welcome to a new year and we look forward to a fabulous 2014-2015 school year!

Saratoga has two bike racks for students to store their bikes if they ride to school. Some reminders for students who do choose to ride to school:

- Students who bike to school MUST wear a bike helmet at all times.
- Students MUST walk their bike across the road and walk the bike while on school property.
- Students should lock their bike to the bike rack during the day.

Please take a moment to remind your child about these rules and contact the school with any additional questions.
Please Sign-Up for Blackboard Parent View

**FCPS 27-7 Learning** is the FCPS resource that allows Fairfax County Public School students to extend their learning beyond the traditional school day and beyond being in the school setting. A login user name and password are required to access the online resources. FCPS 24-7 Learning allows parents to:

- Access homework and classroom assignments
- View classroom calendars
- Explore links to enrichment and support activities
- Update emergency contact information.

Parents can create and validate Parent View accounts at the PTA sponsored Ice Cream Social (September 16), Please look for the booth run by our technology specialist and PTA members. They will be available to help you navigate the process that allows you to access the resources on FCPS 24-7.

Saratoga has a Focus on School Security

The safety and security of our students continues to be a priority at Saratoga Elementary. We regularly review our safety procedures to ensure a safe learning environment for our students. We appreciate your support with this by following these procedures:

- We require **ALL** visitors and volunteers to sign in at the main office and receive a green visitors sticker. Please keep this on at all times while in the building.
- Visitors can expect to be questioned by school personnel if they do not have on a green sticker or an FCPS badge.
- Unless prearranged, volunteering, or doing an observation, we request that parents do not make drop in visits to the classrooms. Parents can contact teachers through email or phone messages. Teachers do their best to respond within 24 hours.
- Please do not let someone enter the building behind you after you rang the bell. All adults need to ring the bell and be let in by the office staff.

Quick Tips for Improving Your Child’s Reading

by: Tina Simons, Reading Resource

Want to know the “secret” for helping your child to succeed in reading? It’s not an expensive program, but it does take a little bit of effort on your part! If there is a “magic formula” for your child, this would be it:

Read every day. Read “just right books.” Read about something you like!

There it is. There’s always more that you can do, but this **needs** to happen. If your child is a beginning or pre-reader, then reading TO them every day is important. If they can read by themselves, they should, That doesn’t mean you can’t read to them, as well!

Hearing books read aloud helps to improve vocabulary, so keep it up!

Above all else, let your child see that YOU think reading and school is important.

Together we can all achieve great things!
“Drill and practice” used to be something we associated a lot with learning our math facts. In this day and age, the concept of “drill and practice” is no longer just for math, but is something students in today’s schools do with their academics, but also to prepare for an emergency procedure.

At Saratoga Elementary, we do weekly fire drills in September and then monthly ones the rest of the year. These drills help students practice quickly exiting the classroom and the building. The building has numbered exit doors which are used to quickly direct fire and rescue teams to the appropriate location. We also do tornado drills twice a year. The office is equipped with weather radios and means for emergency communication.

We are required to complete two lockdown drills each year. Parents are notified of the timing for this via a KIT. Teachers have been trained to respond to a “lockdown” announcement. They secure the classroom and building quickly and the students are taught to remain “sheltered in place” until the official “all clear” is given.

Should a school need to evacuate or go into a lockdown situation, a Crisis Management Plan details student relocation and parent notification plans. The School Crisis Response team and the staff practice responding in emergency situations. Practice doesn’t have to make perfect, but it does increase student safety and security.

Practice Makes.....Safer

A House Full of Box Tops!

Did you know that you may have money for Saratoga sitting in your cabinets right now? Our school participates in the Box Tops for Education program. We collect clipped Box Tops from every day products and use them to get money for school activities. Each box top you clip is worth ten cents and they add up quickly! Please be on the lookout for these valuable nuggets and send them in with your student. It is an easy way to give back to Saratoga!

Please visit the link below for participating products and additional details:

http://www.boxtops4education.com/participating-products

Girls on the Run

Saratoga is starting a Girls on the Run and Girls on Track team this year! Girls on the Run is a program for girls in grades 3-6 that helps elementary age girls learn to deal with issues common for this age group. The program includes lessons on self-esteem, teamwork, body image, nutrition, goal setting, and much more. Each season concludes with a 5K race where each girl runs 3.1 miles with an adult buddy runner.

Saratoga’s teams will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-5:15pm. Transportation will NOT be provided. Teams will be coached entirely by Saratoga teachers.

Registration for the fall season opened on September 2, 2014. If you wish to sign your daughter up, for information on pricing or for additional questions, please go to the link below or call Saratoga:

http://www.gotrnova.org/program/registration
Saratoga Has a New Start and Dismissal Time

Saratoga has a new start and dismissal time! Our morning start time is at 8:55 am. Students will be sent up to their classroom five minutes before the bell at about 8:50 am. Breakfast will continue to be served for all our students that arrive after 8:55 am. If you drive your student and arrive after 9:05 am, please park your car and walk your student into the building. Any car riders that arrive after 9:05 am will be considered tardy. Bus riders that arrive after 9:05 am will be sent right to breakfast or class. The dismissal bell will ring at 3:45 pm. If you meet your child in the front of the building, please keep clear the area in front of the doors, so that students can exit the building.

We are excited that this extra time will give our teachers more time with their students throughout the day!

Please Join the PTA!

We strongly encourage all parents and teachers to join the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA acts as a bridge between school and home. The PTA actively supports programs that our students participate in.

The PTA will host their annual beginning of the year ice cream social on Sept. 16 from 6-8pm, where new and old families get together for ice cream and fun! There will be opportunities to join PTA and/or sign up to volunteer at this event.

To become a member online, please go to: www.saratogapta.org and join us for meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the Language Arts Room. The first PTA meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 7 at 7pm.

Free and Reduced Meal Eligibility

If your child is eligible to receive free or reduced priced meals do not forget to reapply for this school year. Your child(ren) may be eligible for free meals or reduced price meals if your household income is within the specified limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Families must re-apply for eligibility each year. If you have not already reapplied for this year, please do so ASAP. The following link will take you directly to the paperwork that needs to be filled out to determine eligibility, as well as the Federal Income Eligibility chart:

http://www.fcps.edu/fs/food/service/documents/FRAppFormWLetter1
We hope the students and staff had a great first 2 weeks getting to know each other and learning about their new grade and classroom. We were very excited to welcome our new kindergarteners that just joined us! Enjoy some pictures of the first 2 weeks of school! Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year!!